

DIRECTIONS

DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS ASSOCIATION OF TENNESSEE

Many Caring People, One Strong Voice

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October 2005

ALLIANCE FOR FULL PARTICIPATION: VALIDATION AND RESPECT FOR DSP'S

BY DANYETTA NAJOLI

The Alliance for Full Participation (AFP) Summit was held September 22nd and 23rd in Washington, D.C. I had the privilege of attending along with DSPAT Director, Earl Foxx, Jr. During these few pivotal days we were able to hear the collective voices of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities speak about issues that most concern them. The town hall meeting, led by CNN's Frank Sesno, was most impressive because it put real faces, real challenges and real success stories in a position of relevance and meaning.



Danyetta Najoli and Martin Luther King III

While there we were also able to meet with the leaders of the National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals (NADSP, nadsp.org) who were more than thrilled to hear of DSPAT's progress. The NADSP was

one of eleven organizations which organized the AFP Summit. We plan to have a DSPAT article in the next Frontline Initiative, the NADSP's national newsletter.

One of the main goals of our meeting with the NADSP was to discuss ways we can incorporate their membership benefits with DSPAT's membership benefit, such that when people join DSPAT they are also given the chance to join the NADSP. We were able to come up with some great ideas and we are looking forward to hearing your feedback as we roll them out. Yes, it may mean that DSPAT's membership will increase a few dollars, but as a member you will have the opportunity to join the national association. Membership will be open to individuals, associates and organizations.

There are still many states who long for an association like DSPAT. One of the sessions was titled, "From the inside stories, reflections, and predictions about the status of the direct support workforce: What works and what doesn't." According to Amy Hewitt, PhD, there would need to be 900,000 new DSP's entering the field by the year 2020 in order to keep pace with the current 52% turnover rate and the increasing need for DSP services. I shared with the group what we are doing in Tennessee, the great support we have from so many stakeholders like families, self-advocates, state government and agencies. It was very exciting to stand with a group of people who understand why we do what we do. It felt like our role as Direct Support Professionals was validated and respected. DSPAT is a great example for other states to follow. Our best work lies ahead!

As a member of the State Team for the Alliance, DSPAT is committed to seeing changes in the three key areas the summit addressed: Leadership, Community Membership, and Enhancing Services. If you have any questions or comments, please let us know. I have attached a summary of the AFP Summit and the plans for the future. We hope you will join this national movement. For more information, please visit our website at www.dspat.org or call 1-800-835-7077. ●

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Direct from



Earl Foxx, Jr., DSPAT Director.

DSPAT continues to promote the well-being of Direct Support Professionals throughout Tennessee by working with all stakeholders to increase wages and help develop our DSP curriculum statewide. We are also focused on attaining the respect DSP's deserve for performing responsibilities that require true professionals. We must not forget this is our main purpose!

We as human beings, the entire state and nation have a responsibility to perform public service throughout our communities to ensure that the less fortunate, minorities and "differently-abled" receive fair opportunities to live a decent and rewarding life.

Most of us complain from time to time about the Federal and State taxes withheld from our earnings. We expect our tax dollars to support the most vulnerable people in our communities as well as many other efforts such as a clean environment, national security and natural disaster relief. We do not complain as much when we see our hard earned money put to use in the best ways possible.

Let us work together to ensure that no one is being over-looked when it comes to funding and support for their needs. We must make sure that we are not wasting time or resources.

We must do things the right way! How long should a person wait to be provided with the best possible support in the best possible manner? Now, when I say the best possible manner I say it knowing that at times there will be mistakes. However, there is a way to make sure that our system is operating smoothly at all times: Teamwork!

DSPAT's engine is fueled by people power. The encouragement and

support that we receive on a day to day basis from the many people who share and help in executing our vision, is invaluable. DSPAT is driven by our moral and ethical values with the overall common sense that reminds us to constantly care for our people first.

Lastly, DSPAT is spit-polished with the ability to confront issues of concern head-on without wavering or buckling

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DSPAT's Commitment to Quality Training Opportunities

At DSPAT, we are always looking for ways to bring unique and enriching learning experiences to our DSP's. The DSP Professional Development Certificate Program is a new program designed to provide you with continuous multi-faceted learning that will lead toward a certificate in Professional Development. We want to strengthen the knowledge base of the Direct Support Professional which will result in greater job/life satisfaction and performance.

Another benefit of this program is DSP's, from diverse backgrounds and locations, will have the opportunity to engage in thought-provoking dialogue that will result in the exchange of valuable knowledge and know-how. Working together is a skill that is much needed in the field of Direct Support. This program will assist DSP's in understanding their individual personality and style for better interpersonal working relationships.

Although this program is not mandatory, DSP's will find it both personally and professionally satisfying.

Cost: DSPAT Members: Free; Non-DSPAT Members: \$10.00 (to be applied towards 1-year DSPAT Annual Membership)

Location: DSPAT, 44 Vantage Way, Suite 550, Conference Room, Nashville, TN 37228. A toll-free conference line is also available for those living outside Nashville.

Fall Schedule

Date:	September 28, 2005	October 26, 2005	November 30, 2005
Time:	10:00am–12:00pm central	10:00am – 12:00pm central	10:00am – 12:00pm central
Topic:	DSP as Leader	Defining Success	Helping Others go through Life Transitions

For more information and a registration form, visit www.dspat.org or call Danyetta Najoli or Karen O'Brien at 1-800-835-7077.

East Tennessee DSP's Get Together for a Day of MUSIC, FOOD AND FUN

On Saturday, September 17th DSPAT held an East Tennessee regional meeting and appreciation picnic at Clark Park in Oak Ridge. It was a beautiful afternoon with a great turnout. DSP's from the Michael Dunn Center, Emory Valley Developmental Center and CP Center were among the attendees. DSPAT Director Earl Foxx, Jr. was on hand to speak personally with each person there.

They put on a great show singing a variety of country and rock songs.

DSPAT would especially like to thank Laura Jernigan for her part in organizing this event. We could not have done it without you! Laura has been invited to join DSPAT as an Assistant Team Leader for the East Region and is currently an employee of the Emory Valley Developmental Center. Thanks again Laura and welcome aboard!

Mark your Calendars!! DSPAT's next DSP meeting and appreciation picnic is scheduled for Saturday, October 29th from 1:00 - 6:00 pm at Centennial Park in Nashville. DSP's, individuals with disabilities and their families throughout Tennessee are invited



VSA arts Tennessee artist Chris O'Brien entertains the crowd.

John Clayton, DSPAT's East Tennessee Team Leader manned the grill providing everyone with delicious hot dogs and hamburgers and a big helping of appreciation for the hard work and dedication of Tennessee DSP's!

Many DSP's were accompanied by the individuals they support and all had a wonderful time getting to know each other. The group also enjoyed live music provided by Chris O'Brien, a performing artist with VSA arts Tennessee and 13 year old singing sensation Sabrina Hargrove.



DSPAT's John Clayton, Michael Dunn Center's Carrie Fenton and John Yarbrough enjoy the festivities.

to attend. VSA arts Tennessee is providing live entertainment and a variety of crafts for all to enjoy!!! For more information about this upcoming event and how you can help, please visit our website at www.dspat.org ♦

"GOLDEN RULE" Basic Performance Standards for DSP's

Speak to all people politely, as you would like to be spoken to

Include all people in conversations; speak with them, not about them

Use positive verbal and non-verbal communication; avoid being negative

Explain things in ways that people can understand and observe how they receive the information

Encourage people to think by asking questions rather than giving commands

Teach individuals to do so as much as possible for themselves rather than doing for them

Include people in making decisions by providing choices; try not to be bossy

Respect differences and an individual's desires, needs and values

Consider seriously the feelings and concerns of others even if they don't seem important to you

Listen to each other's point of view, even if upset or involved in a disagreement, and not allow it to affect your behavior

Designing Danyetta

An Interview with DSPAT's Chairperson

Danyetta Najoli is Chairperson of the Direct Support Professionals Association of Tennessee. She is employed as a Direct Support Professional with Progress, Inc. of Cheatham County.

How did you become a Direct Support Professional?

In order for me to answer that question I think I should put things into context. Around six years ago, I was a corporate manager for a global bank. I had been in the corporate world for about seven years and done fairly well. However, my level of fulfillment and satisfaction began to diminish. Without knowing exactly what I was going to do next, I boldly set out to rekindle and expand my love for helping others. With that as a premise, I was determined to work for an organization whose mission was simply to help others. I discovered Progress, Inc. and began working as a companion's assistant and eventually a companion. This was incredibly rewarding to me. I have been supporting one person in particular since I entered the profession and we have become very close. I feel I am able to provide him with a tremendous amount of stability and consistency in his life. Also, knowing that I could continue to use my professional skills to help this field was another big motivator for me.



Danyetta Najoli

When did you first hear about DSPAT?

I first heard about DSPAT in August 2000, when I volunteered as a Behavior Supports trainer for the Training Alliance. The Training Alliance consisted of around five agency providers in middle Tennessee who shared their resources to maximize their training efforts. I also had just started in my career as a DSP. One of the DSPAT founders, Sam Adams, contacted me about distributing DSPAT brochures and other materials to class attendees. I was so impressed with the mission of DSPAT that I was more than willing to assist the association.

What motivated you to join DSPAT?

As a former corporate manager, I am always looking for ways to be more professional in the way I work. Other widely known professions, such as banking, law, nursing and teaching have professional associations that people can join. This gives a larger scope to their individual roles and helps them to gain resources and information about their profession. I was also motivated to join DSPAT because it was small and ready to grow into a much larger organization. I enjoy contributing to the success of grassroots efforts, especially in a field that is not given as much credence as other professions.

As chairperson, what is your main focus for DSPAT?

Membership recruitment. We have zeroed in on community-based agencies and visited college classrooms. We also have several DSP appreciation events at various agencies across Tennessee. This has proven to be one of the most effective ways to get the word out about DSPAT.

Meaningful and relevant training opportunities, some of which translate into merit-based pay increases, and recognizing DSP's for the valuable work they do through our statewide recognition program.

What are some of DSPAT's new initiatives?

DSPAT co-facilitated the state's "Mentoring DSP's in Quality Assurance Processes" training project. We are also a state team member of the Alliance for Full Participation. We have developed a new program called the DSP Professional Development Certificate program. This program gives DSP's throughout the state the opportunity for learning experiences that they would not normally have access to. We also will be conducting regional focus groups to discover how we can attract and retain new members and leaders within DSPAT. Lastly, we have increased our commitment to the 2006 MegaConference by becoming a major sponsor. So, our hands are very full this year with great projects.

How has DSPAT grown over the years?

DSPAT is growing and expanding its focus from the earlier years. We have three staff positions now. We could not say that just a year ago. We are

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Michelle's Crawfish Chowder

- 1 stick of butter
- 1 cup Portobello mushrooms, chopped
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup green onions chopped
- 8 oz cream cheese
- 2 cans whole kernel corn
- 3 cans cream of potato soup
- 1 quart of half and half
- 1 lb (thought 2 is better) cooked crawfish tails
- salt and pepper or cayenne to taste

Melt butter in large pot, sauté mushrooms and onions. Add cream cheese, stir until melted. Add corn, soup and half and half. Heat but do not boil. Add crawfish, bring to a light boil and then simmer. Be sure to stir frequently to prevent bottom burning. Season to taste.

Peggy's Fruit Tea - makes 1 gallon

- 4 Family size tea bags or 10 small tea bags
- 1 small can of frozen lemonade
- 1 small can of frozen orange juice
- 1 - 2 cups sugar (to taste) (or you can use sweetener to taste)

Steep tea in 1 quart hot water. I make it in the microwave in a 1 quart Pyrex measuring cup. Pour into 1 gallon container. Add sugar or sweetener. Stir. Add frozen juices. Stir. Finish filling container with water and stir or shake one last time.

Chunky Cheese and Black Bean Salsa Dip

- 4 - 5 fresh ripe tomatoes, diced
- 1 small onion or 4 green onions, chopped
- 1 - 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- $\frac{1}{4}$ c. cilantro, chopped
- 1 - 4 jalapeno peppers (depending on how hot you like it)
- Squirt of lime juice (optional)
- 1 can black beans, drained
- 1 jar Ragu cheese sauce

Combine all ingredients. Can be served hot or cold.

Chocolate Walnut Coconut Bars

- 11 Graham Crackers, crushed (about $1 \frac{1}{4}$ cups crumbs)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup ($\frac{1}{2}$ stick) butter or margarine, melted
- 1 pkg. (8 oz.) Semi-Sweet Baking Chocolate, chopped
- $1 \frac{1}{2}$ cups Flake Coconut
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup Walnut Pieces
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup raisins
- 1 can (14 oz.) sweetened condensed milk

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line a 13x9 inch baking pan with foil leaving 3 inches of foil extending over short sides of the pan. Create handles by crunching up extended foil; great foil lining. Mix crushed grahams and butter. Press evenly onto bottom of prepared pan. Sprinkle chocolate, coconut, walnuts and raisins over crust. Pour sweetened condensed milk over mixture in pan. Bake 25 to 30 min. or until lightly browned. Cool in pan. Lift out of pan onto cutting board, using foil handles. Cut into bars to serve. Makes about 32 servings.

Skillet Fiesta Chicken & Rice

- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 4 skinless, boneless chicken breast halves (about 1 pound)
- 1 can (10 ? oz.) Campbell's Tomato Soup
- $1 \frac{1}{3}$ cups water
- 1 teaspoon chili powder
- $1 \frac{1}{2}$ cups uncooked instant rice
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup shredded Cheddar cheese (1 oz.)

In a medium skillet over medium-high heat, heat oil. Add chicken and cook 10 minutes or until browned. Set chicken aside. Pour off fat. Add soup, water and chili powder. Heat to a boil. Stir in rice. Place chicken on rice mixture. Sprinkle chicken with additional chili powder and cheese. Reduce heat to low. Cover and cook 5 minutes or until chicken and rice are done. Stir rice mixture. Makes 4 servings.



FILL ER' UP!

WHERE'S THE CHEAPEST GAS?

www.TennesseeGasPrices.com

(Mid-October)

Memphis

Dodge Store	Hwy. 305 and Old Goodman (Olive Branch)
Oil City	2666 No. Watkins (North)
Nanna's	3164 No. Watkins (North)
Express Gas	No. Thomas (North)
Citgo	Winchester and So. Goodlett (Southeast)
Flash Market	4251 Winchester (South)
Super K Mart	Austin Peay Hwy. (Northeast)
Shell Food Mart	1990 West Poplar (Collierville)
Phillips 66	Ramill & Yale (Northeast)
Citgo	Winchester and Hickory Hill (Southeast)

Nashville

Phillips 66	Gallatin Rd. and Mallard Rd. (Hendersonville)
Keystop	New Shackle Rd. & Industrial Rd. (Hendersonville)
Citgo	1st St. No. & Oldham St. (East)
Citgo	Dickerson Rd. (North)
Swiftly Oil	Robinson Rd. & Newport Dr. (Old Hickory)
Phillips 66	Old Hickory Blvd. & Rio Vista Dr. (Madison)
Pilot	Waldron Rd. & I-24 (LaVergne)
Marathon	Waldron Rd. (LaVergne)

Knoxville

Finish Line Fuels	8871 Kingston Pike (West)
Gas Mart	5724 Clinton Hwy. (North)
Exxon	7551 Oak Ridge Hwy. & Grey Hendrix Rd. (Karnes)
Pride	Rutledge Pike (East)
Weigel's	Gallahar Rd. & I-40 (Kingston)
Raceway	Pellissippi & Solway (West)
RaceTrac	Solway (Oak Ridge)
Gas Express	Alcoa Hwy. & Green Acres Flea Market (Alcoa)
Amoco	Exit 369 at I-40 East (Farragut)
Texaco	Lawnville Rd. (Kingston)

Others

Murphy USA	Hwy. 111 (Sparta)
Pilot Oil	Exit 287, I-40 (Cookeville)
Citgo	Exit 172, I-40 (Dickson)
Murphy USA	West Church (Lexington)
Sam's Club	Lee Hwy. (Chattanooga)
Dodge Store	Broad St. (Murfreesboro)
Raceway	Morris Blvd. & Rt. 25 East (Morristown)

UPCOMING EVENTS

DSP Appreciation Day & Disability Awareness Month Celebration

Saturday, October 29th,
1:00 pm – 6:00 pm
Centennial Park, Nashville

DSP's, individuals with disabilities and their families throughout Tennessee are invited! This is a great opportunity for everyone to get together for a great time! We hope you will join us for a day of food, fun, informational booths, along with live entertainment and crafts provided by VSA arts Tennessee. This is developing into an exciting event! To R.S.V.P or for more information on ways you can support this event, call Earl Foxx or Karen O'Brien at 615-248-5878 or toll free 1-800-835-7077.

DSPAT at the Bluebird Café!

Tuesday, November 29th
6:30 pm – 8:30 pm
Bluebird Café, 4104 Hillsboro Pike,
Nashville

DSPAT is proud to be one of the sponsors of "A Night at the Bluebird" benefiting VSA arts Tennessee, a non-profit organization "Promoting the Creative Power in People with Disabilities." All performers are artists with disabilities and include The Seedy Sea Band, Chris O'Brien, Cynthia Andresen, Billy Phillips and Wes Heydel, (VSA arts Tennessee's 2005 Young Soloist Winner).

For more information about this event and VSA arts Tennessee, visit their website at www.vsaartstennessee.org

* DSPAT is looking for volunteers!! Call Karen at 615-248-5878 if you would like to help with this event.



If you have ever called the Direct Support Professionals Association of Tennessee (DSPAT) office, you might have experienced a moment of confusion when the phone is answered and you hear, "Thank you for calling The ARC of Tennessee, how may I help you?" Yes, DSPAT is currently located within The Arc of Tennessee offices in Nashville. When you call, the phone is cheerfully answered by Scott Finney, Administrative Assistant for The ARC.

Scott has been with The Arc of Tennessee since 1988 and has become an invaluable member of the organization.

"He's our historian and frontline man and over the years has trained us all," said Peggy Cooper, The ARC of Tennessee Operations Manager.

Besides being one of the most recognized self-advocates in the state, Scott has won many awards for his efforts in helping others achieve self-advocacy and independence, and is a tremendous supporter of DSPAT. We are very proud to call him our friend. ●

DSPAT Mission Statement

The Direct Support Professional Association of Tennessee advocates a high standard of care for people with disabilities and encourages training as well as recognition for all direct support personnel. By promoting education and peer connections, we are creating a better caliber work force that will elevate the quality of life for the people we support as well as for ourselves.

DSPAT Goals

- Enhance the status of Direct Support Professionals in Tennessee
- Provide better access for all DSP's to high quality educational experiences
- Strengthen the working relationships and partnerships between DSP's, self-advocates, families and others
- Support the development and implementation of career paths for DSP's
- Promote systems reform and policy initiatives that provide incentives for educational experiences, increased compensation and access to career pathways

Direct from Earl...cont.

under pressure. With professionalism and a strong desire to resolve problems, we all succeed.

DSPAT will continue to work hard to see that the front line, Tennessee DSP's, receive the resources needed to succeed, such as offering training opportunities and the wage and benefit increases set to be rolled out in the next couple of months. The DSP's of Tennessee, through our teamwork and dedication are, and will continue to be seen as "Many Caring People, One Strong Voice." God Bless you all.

Earl Foxx, Jr. ●



**Direct Support Professionals
Association of Tennessee (D-SPAT)**

An affiliate of the National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals

"Many Caring People, One Strong Voice"

44 Vantage Way, Suite 550
Nashville, TN 37228
1-800-835-7077

*B. Earl Foxx, Jr., Director
L. Danyetta Najoli, Chair*

DSPAT Membership Application

Your DSPAT membership includes a member identification card, access to regular DSPAT e-news, job and volunteer opportunities, discounts on Tennessee conferences, and other benefits.

Please check one:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$10 DSPAT membership | -for people who work in a direct support role |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 Friends of DSPAT | -for people who do not work in a direct support role |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Supporters of DSPAT | -for agencies and organizations who support our mission |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$51+ Contributors of DSPAT | -for individuals or organizations who support our mission |

Region: East West Middle

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Home Phone: () _____ Work Phone: () _____

Email Address: (print clearly) _____

Agency Name: _____

Agency Address: _____

Agency Phone: () _____

Agency Contact Name: _____

How did you hear about us? ☐ Agency ☐ Friend ☐ Website ☐ Other: _____

Would you like to be contacted when volunteer opportunities arise? ☐ YES ☐ NO

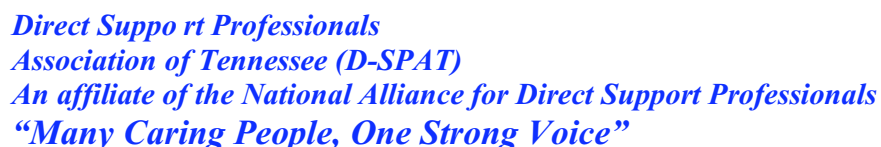
Tell us about yourself. Include how long you're worked in the field of DD, in what capacity, and any other information you wish to share:

What talents, gifts, skills, or services would you like to volunteer?

Check all that apply:

- ☐ Contributing stories, recipes, poems, inspirational quotes to our Member e-news
- ☐ Newsletter layout, editing, writing articles, etc.
- ☐ Volunteer at conferences (info & registration, greeter, personal assistants, speaker's asst.)
- ☐ Volunteer at membership drives and campaigns (coordinate and promote events, etc.)
- ☐ Speak to groups about DSPAT for donations and contributions
- ☐ Speak to groups about DSPAT for membership enrollment
- ☐ Participate in community building activities
- ☐ Other: _____
- ☐ Other: _____
- ☐ Other: _____

www.dspat.org



Do you know a DSP that should be recognized for their hard work and dedication? Please take a moment to nominate this outstanding Direct Support Professional.

Phone Number: ()

[illegible]

Your Phone Number: ()

DANYETTA...cont.

committed to being more strategic in our approach, which helps us to build a solid and lasting foundation. We are being more creative in how we meet with our members who are spread out across the state, and who work different shifts and in different settings. We hold our annual meetings at the Tennessee Disability MegaConference as a way to bring more DSP's together on voting and other issues. We were also able to present at the conference this year, giving us a greater presence to our members and prospective members.

Throughout the year we collect DSP's concerns, ideas and suggestions at regional gatherings and meetings. Now we are able to funnel DSP issues and concerns directly to Division of Mental Retardation Services Deputy Commissioner Stephen Norris. Deputy Commissioner Norris is very committed to DSPAT's success.

Also, DSPAT is affiliated with the National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals. www.nadsp.org.

What are some of the challenges DSPAT faces?

One is dispelling rumors of unionizing. DSPAT has no plans to become a union. We look at our association as a community of Direct Support Professionals who want to align themselves with a professional organization. They may need help in resolving issues they face on the job. They may require assistance finding employment. There is training and development, both professionally and personally. Resources and benefits they may not otherwise have access to. All these things can be attained through being a DSPAT member. There is also the strong sense of community in a field that can seem thankless and isolating at times.

DSPAT also faces connecting our large membership base, which is spread across the state. We have

responded to this challenge by developing an on-line discussion board for DSP's, organizing regional events and meetings, and offering teleconference options for our members during meetings.

How can community-based agencies partner with DSPAT?

We have been successful in our DSP Appreciation events in which many agencies have participated to help recognize their DSP's and to raise the awareness of the association. It is a great way to introduce the association to new and seasoned DSP's. Also, it is a great way to partner with agencies that believe that DSP's are the most valuable front line employees in their service delivery system. ●

Direct Support Professionals Association of Tennessee, Inc. A Chapter of the National Alliance for Direct Support

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Directions

Directions is a bi-monthly newsletter for Direct Support Professionals. Directions is written and produced by Karen O'Brien, DSPAT Communications Manager.

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